



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC ESTABLISHES EMERGENCY RULE FOR 2-1-1 SERVICE

Jefferson City (February 6, 2004)---Citing a need, the Public Service Commission has approved and will file with the Secretary of State an emergency rule which provides the framework for establishing 2-1-1 telecommunications service in Missouri. The emergency rule also contains requirements for an organization to be designated as a 2-1-1 provider.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has previously designated 2-1-1 as a national abbreviated dialing code for community information and referral services. The intent is to provide callers with direct access to organizations capable of making referrals to services such as housing assistance, counseling and hospice services that are not currently available through the 911 emergency code.

In order for 2-1-1 service to be provided in an area of the state, the information and referral service provider would need to file an application and have that application acted upon by the Public Service Commission.

The emergency rule states: "This rule is intended to enhance the ability of the public to access services that provide free information and referral to community resources in situations that are not immediately life-endangering, but still represent a serious but less urgent threat to basic human needs and individuals' health or welfare."

Under the emergency rule, a customer will not be charged by either the telephone company or the 2-1-1 provider for using the service.

When available in their area of the state, the abbreviated dialing code (2-1-1) will enable callers to connect with an information and referral provider without having to dial a seven or ten digit telephone number. Under the emergency rule, an information and referral provider is an organization which would act as an intermediary, matching the person with the necessary combination of human services that will address the individual's needs.

The Missouri Public Service Commission has received an application from a United Way organization which is seeking to be a 2-1-1 service provider in SBC Missouri exchanges in 16 western Missouri counties (Andrew, Buchanan, DeKalb, Clinton, Caldwell, Platte, Clay, Ray, Jackson, Lafayette, Cass, Johnson, Saline, Pettis, Bates and Henry).

The emergency rule will be filed with the Secretary of State with an effective date of March 15, 2004 and will remain in effect for 180 days. The Commission plans to have a permanent rule in place when the emergency rule expires.